

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AGR-05 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 COME-00 TRSE-00 /040 W

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R 081424Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3127

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, ECON, UR

SUBJECT: INCREASING ALARM EVIDENT IN RECENT SOVIET PRESS
REPORTING OF HARVEST OPERATIONS

REF: MOSCOW 11031

1. DURING THE PAST THREE DAYS SOVIET NATIONAL PRESS REPORT-
ING OF HARVEST PROGRESS HAS BECOME PERCEPTIVELY LESS
OPTIMISTIC, WITH ARTICLES IN BOTH PRAVDA AND IZVESTIYA DEVOTING
INCREASED ATTENTION TO SHORTCOMINGS ENCOUNTERED IN A GROWING
NUMBER OF REGIONS. ARTICLES INDICATE SLOWDOWN IN HARVEST
OPERATIONS DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS, DUE BOTH TO INCLEMENT
WEATHER AND INSUFFICIENT PREPARATION OF MACHINERY AND EQUIP-
MENT. IN ADDITION TO THE AREAS CITED IN PARA 2 OF
REFTEL, THE OBLASTS OF TULA, VLADIMIR, IVANOV, LIPETSK,
AND THE MORDOVIAN AND CHUVASH ASSR'S HAVE BEEN SINGLED OUT IN
THIS REGARD. ONE ARTICLE (IZVESTIYA, AUGUST 6) STATED THAT
300 THOUSAND HECTARES OF GRAIN STILL HAVE NOT BEEN HARVESTED
IN LIPETSK OBLAST. SHATTERED GRAIN (BARLEY AND OATS) HAS
BEEN REPORTED IN SOME AREAS OF THE CHUVASH ASSR.

2. A GROWING CONCERN FOR ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF CORN
FOR GRAIN IS REFLECTED IN PRAVDA AUGUST 7. THE ARTICLE
NOTES, THAT, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, CORN FIELDS WHICH PRE-
VIOUSLY WERE DESIGNATED FOR SILAGE AND GREEN FODDER
ARE NOW TO BE HARVESTED FOR GRAIN. THE SAME ARTICLE
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ALSO CLAIMS THAT IN SOME REGIONS OF POLTAVA AND

KHARKOV OBLASTS CORN HAS ALREADY BEEN CUT FOR SILAGE AND GREEN FODDER WHEN IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN CUT FOR GRAIN.

3. PRAVDA, AUGUST 8, CONTINUES TO CRITICIZE THE LACK OF PREPARATION FOR HARVEST OPERATIONS, CITING THE AREAS OF NOVOSIBIRSK, OREL, AND ARALYK. IN ADDITION THE CITIES OF EAST-KAZAKHSTAN OBLAST RECEIVED CRITICISM FOR NOT PROVIDING SUFFICIENT HELP TO THE FARM AREAS.

4. COMMENT - THE GENERAL TONE OF THESE ARTICLES, WHILE NOT ONE OF PANIC, INDICATES MOUNTING CONCERN AND HINTS THAT SERIOUS PROBLEMS MAY EXIST IN SOME OF THE MAJOR GRAIN GROWING REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY. GRADUAL MUTING OF OPTIMISM ON 1975 CROP YIELDS HAS BECOME EVIDENT SINCE END JULY AND SUGGESTS SOVIETS MAY BE PREPARING GENERAL PUBLIC FOR WORSE CROP NEWS TO COME.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, MEATS, GRAINS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MOSCOW11185
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750274-1002
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750870/aaaacjnr.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MOSCOW 11031
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <27 OCT 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INCREASING ALARM EVIDENT IN RECENT SOVIET PRESS REPORTING OF HARVEST OPERATIONS
TAGS: EAGR, ECON, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006